

**Swami Narasingha:** That is of course ISKCON's misunderstanding, a novel idea, but such thinking was not present in the time of Srila Prabhupada (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami) nor is it a fact.

In the first place Bhaktivinoda Thakura was not staying in Godrumadvipa when he had his vision of the Adbhuta Mandira. In fact Bhaktivinoda's house at Godruma was not built until two years later. Bhaktivinoda's house, Svananda Sukhada Kunja, was constructed in 1889 whereas his vision of the Adbhuta Mandira occurred in 1887 when he was staying at the Rani Dharmasala across the Ganga in Navadvipa town. Rani Dharmasala is the same place where Gaura-kishora Dasa Babaji used to spend much of his time doing bhajana.

Bhaktivinoda was living and working in government service at Krsnanagara during those days. He used to come to Navadvipa on the weekends to try to find out the places of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes. Bhaktivinoda has mentioned that he was especially disappointed in that the residents of Navadvipa were not very interested in such things (he has specifically mentioned that they only pay heed to their stomach). It was on one such visit to Navadvipa when he was staying at the Rani Dharmasala that Bhaktivinoda had the vision of the Adbhuta Mandira.

One Saturday evening Bhaktivinoda was standing on the roof of the *dharmasala* with his son Kamala Prasada and a clerk from his office. He was looking in a northerly direction when a brilliant light appeared on the horizon across the Ganga. Within that effulgence appeared the Adbhuta Mandira.



When looking in the northerly direction from the place where Bhaktivinoda was standing the present day ISKCON project does not come into view and even if it did the point to remember is that the vision of the Adbhuta Mandira was specifically revealing the birth site of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, therefore the Adbhuta Mandira must be built at Yogapitha and not just anywhere in Mayapura.

Bhaktivinoda had the vision of the Adbhuta Mandir on two consecutive occasions. Some years later in a letter to one of his sons Bhaktivinoda detailed the experience of his vision of the Adbhuta Mandira and the events that led to the discovery of Mahaprabhu's birth site (Yogapitha) in Mayapura. That segment of Bhaktivinoda's letter follows:

"During the Christmas break I took a train to Navadvipa with my wife. Arriving there and seeing the land in all four directions the hair on my body stood on end. Upon crossing the Ganga, and I went to Rani Dharmasala and I made arrangements to cook for Sriman Mahaprabhu. Having taken *darsana* of the Lord with difficulty I honored *prasada* at around 1 o'clock. After 45 days [of dieting], I took

grains, jackfruit dahl, banana-flour sabji, and soup etc., which were like nectar. Since my very birth I had not eaten such nectarine food. Even Bimal ate everything on his plate, and with great devotion.

"We had to go to the house at Krsnanagara before evening and thus, buying some cooking pots and utensils, and quickly crossing [the river], we took the train to Krsnanagara. The next day I went to Baro Gosvami's house in Santipura, took prasada, and before evening returned home. At that time I was beginning to become strong. Every Saturday, I went to Navadvipa to search out the places of the *lila* of the Lord, but I did not find many and I was very unhappy. At the present time the people of Navadvipa only pay heed to their stomach etc. They do not make even a little effort in relation to the places of the *lila* of the Lord. One night, Kamala and a clerk and I went up on the roof in order to look around.

"It was 10 o'clock, and was very dark and cloudy. Across the Ganga, in a northerly direction, I saw a large building flooded with light. I asked Kamala (if he saw it) and he said he had. I asked the clerk and he said, "I did not see anything." Because of that I was utterly amazed. In the morning I looked carefully at the place [where I saw the building] from the roof of the Rani Dharmasala, and I observed that there was one Tal tree in that location. When I asked others about this place they said that this distant place was known as Ballaldighi and that the remains of the fort etc. of Laksmana Sena were close by. That Monday I returned to Krsnanagara and the following Saturday I went back to Ballaldighi. I saw that wonderful phenomenon in that place again at night, and the next day I went to see the area on foot. Upon inquiring of the elderly people of

that place, I was informed that this was the birthplace of Sriman Mahaprabhu. I gradually saw everything (in the area) and ascertained where all the small villages mentioned in the *Caitanya-bhagavata* and in Narahari Thakura's *Bhakti-ratnakara* and *Parikrama Paddhati* were.

"While staying in Krsnanagara I wrote *Sri Navadvipa-Dhama Mahatmya* and sent it to Calcutta to be printed. I explained all these matters to Dvarik Babu, an engineer from Krsnanagara, and through the strength of his intellect understood everything. He made a map of the area around Navadvipa for me. That also was printed in a reduced form in *Dhama Mahatmya*. While I travelled around Navadvipa Dhama and wrote *Navadvipa-dhama Mahatmya* I saw that there was very little opportunity to do more." (Bhaktivinoda's letter to Lalita Prasad, written 1896)

We have been criticized by some of our friends for making too much of the issue of the Adbhuta Mandira but we see no advantage in distorting the facts, allowing such distortions to flourish or in denying the reality that Bhaktivinoda's vision was fulfilled by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta who constructed the Adbhuta Mandira at Yogapitha in 1933 - which is indeed a most wonderful temple.

One devotee from ISKCON has written to suggest that "Couldn't there be two Adbhuta Mandiras, one at Yogapitha and one at ISKCON?" But that would be tantamount to saying, "Couldn't there be two founder-acaryas of ISKCON?" - obviously unacceptable!

Of course there can be many wonderful temples at Mayapur and indeed there are, but we should remember that 'big isn't always best'- small is beautiful, small is also wonderful. In spiritual life

proper conception is everything and the vision of Bhaktivinoda and the conception of Lord Nityananda, as given in *Navadvipa-dhama Mahatmya*, is that the Adbhuta Mandira is located at the birth site of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

The ISKCON project of late that is being referred to as the Adbhuta Mandira, was originally started by our spiritual master, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Prabhupada, laid the cornerstone of the temple in 1977. Prabhupada however never made any reference to his ambitious temple project being the Adbhuta Mandira. In fact Srila Prabhupada distinctly referred to his project as the Temple of Understanding or the Planetarium. It is only now, within the past decade or so, that some energetic disciples of Prabhupada have hyped up the ISKCON Planetarium project (for fund raising purposes) by calling it the Adbhuta Mandira. This however has no basis. It is indisputable—the Adbhuta Mandira was constructed at Yogapitha in 1933.